Cervical screening test

Fact sheet

Easy Read
About this fact sheet

This fact sheet is from Jean Hailes for Women’s Health.

You can read more information about this topic on the Jean Hailes Cervical screening test web page.

This fact sheet is written in a way that is easy to understand.

We add a star before and after *hard words*. Then we explain what the words mean.

You can ask someone to help you read and understand this fact sheet.

Contact information is at the end of this fact sheet.
**What is a *cervical screening test***?

The cervical screening test helps protect you from cervical cancer.

There used to be a test called a pap smear. Now people have a cervical screening test. We will call it the **test**.

The test checks your *cervix* for the *human papilloma virus* or HPV.

The cervix is at the top of the vagina.

HPV causes most cervical cancers.

Most people with HPV do **not** have symptoms so it is important to get tested.
Do you need a cervical screening test?

You need to have a test if

● you are a woman or person with a cervix

and

● you are aged 25 to 74

and

● you have had any kind of sex with another person.

How often do you need a test?

You need to have a test every 5 years if you are aged 25 to 74.

It is safe to have the test every 5 years because the test finds HPV early.
Where can you have a test?

You can have a test at

- a doctor’s clinic
- a health centre
- a family planning clinic.

Access to health care

You can contact your local clinic or health centre **before** your visit to tell them about your needs.

For example, you might need

- easy access to get in and around the clinic
- a hoist to move onto a bed
- clear information to take home and read.
You can also ask for a longer appointment if you need it.

How is the test done?

Book an appointment at a clinic or centre.

You can

- get a doctor or nurse to do the test
  - you can ask for a female to do the test

- do the test yourself.

Both options are safe and will give the same results.
When a doctor or nurse does the test

The doctor or nurse will take you to a private room and ask you to take off your underpants.

They will ask you to lie on a bed with your knees apart.

You will be given a sheet to cover yourself.

They will gently insert a *speculum* into your vagina.

A speculum is a plastic or metal device that opens the vagina so the doctor or nurse can see the cervix.

They will use a small brush to take a sample from your cervix.

This might feel strange but it should not hurt.
When you do your own test

You will be given a test kit and instructions.

You can do the test in a private room by yourself.

You can ask someone to come in and help you.

Wash your hands before and after you do the test.

Take off your underpants and

● insert the *swab* into your vagina
  – a swab is like a long cotton bud

● move the swab around in circles in your vagina for 10 to 30 seconds
  – this might feel strange but it should not hurt

● put the swab in the pack and give it to the nurse.
What happens after your test?

The sample will be sent to a lab for testing.

If your test does **not** show HPV you can wait 5 years before you do another test.

The National Cancer Screening Register will send you a letter about your next test.

If your test shows HPV your doctor will talk to you about next steps.

For more information about the National Cervical Screening Program call 1800 627 701.
More information

For more information contact Jean Hailes for Women’s Health.

Call 03 9453 8999

Website jeanhailes.org.au

Email education@jeanhailes.org.au

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